



***THE NIGHT PICKET AT  
ALLIED, LIVERPOOL  
SOLIDARITY!***



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## EDITOR'S NOTES

"You told us that your wages don't give you enough to properly feed yourself and your family good food – This isn't good enough in the biggest manufacturing unit in one of the richest nations in the world"

[sarah.woolley@bfawu.org](mailto:sarah.woolley@bfawu.org)

### Allied Bakeries Strike

I COULDN'T START this edition's editorial without giving a huge shout out to our members in Liverpool who have come together collectively and taken to the gates in response to the company's pay offer.

There have been several offers given, but each of them has meant the gap between their consolidated hourly rate and the minimum wage is closing fast. This at a time when we are living in a cost-of-living crisis and the interim results of the company boast that, in the Food section of the group, performance sales across all businesses are **up 23%** with an adjusted operating profit **up 13%**.

Eroding the differentials down to the minimum wage is **not** going to repay the loyalty that our members have shown for years – not least of which took place during the pandemic.

From their own report, the company says that *'Allied Bakeries secured significant pricing in the period and the results improved. The trajectory of this performance is encouraging with the financial performance improving through the period and, as a consequence, a bigger improvement is expected in the second half. We continue to work on improvements to the financial performance of this business.'*

It's time to dip into some of that profit and reward the workers for keeping the business going *and* building it up over the years. It was great to see the reps from Stockport come across to show their solidarity during the strikes, we know that other sites are currently negotiating or about to begin their negotiations, **so watch this space as things progress.**

All the messages of solidarity and visits to the picket line from unions, MPs, Councillors and other organisations have been gratefully received by the members of branch 432!



### Conference

We are about to embark on the 2023 Annual Conference, please look out for posts on social media to keep you updated with what's going on. If you are there as a delegate, please use the **#BFAWU23**.

The theme of this year's Conference is **organising**. We will be launching a competition whilst there and talking about some of the great work that has been going on that I will touch on later in this piece – as well as celebrating the members of the old Hovis, Wigan **Branch 417** who walked out on industrial action 10 years ago this year, not to benefit themselves, but to prevent *zero hours contracts* from being implemented at site for others – a good reminder that as trade unionists we don't act for ourselves, we are not here to benefit individually, we are here to support others, to empower others and that **when we stand together we are powerful!**



## Membership

In my last editorial, I explained where we are membership-wise, which was quite a risk, putting it out there publicly for all to see. But it was a risk worth taking – I truly believe it is important to be open, transparent, fair and consistent in our approach. Members deserve nothing less when they join and pay us subs each week or month. No individual is going to turn around the membership in our union, we can only do it together, *collectively*, with everyone playing their part.

But I am pleased to say that last quarter the majority of the regions saw an increase in membership when compared to the quarter before – this doesn't mean we can take our foot off the pedal we have a long way to go, but it is a start!

**It's worth highlighting here some of the great work that has been going on to increase membership.**

**Mowi** – up in Scotland, a Salmon preparation factory and a greenfield site that has gone from *zero* members to *almost fifty* in a couple of months, after a handful of visits from officials and supporters.

# MOWI

They have an active WhatsApp group and are keen to build up membership further, I am excited to see how the branch will grow during the rest of the year and what wins they will create at work as a result!

**Sex Workers** – much like when our *interpreters* branch was formed a few years ago from a group of workers who were looking for a trade union home, we have a new branch of *sex workers*.



In the last two months, 99 new members have joined and this will continue to grow. The main issues of these workers are worker status – bogus self-employment is rife in the industry – contract breaches, payments not being made and safety whilst at work.

**Greggs** – Our reps have been out in force since the beginning of the year with well over 230 new members having been made across the UK. This is fantastic and shows that getting out and about into the shops to talk to people really does help to encourage people to join!



Every member who visits a Greggs shop can help with this (as members, reps and officers from other unions do!) it takes a couple of seconds to ask if the person serving you is in the union!

**Organising week in Region 5** – You may have seen the posts on social media from BFAWU Scotland at the end of May, Region 5 embarked on an *organising week*, a week focused on targeted organising to help grow membership – there were plenty of photos and posts from Scotland.

*Wouldn't it be great if every region had a quarterly organising week!*

## Food workers on the breadline

Thank you to all the members who filled in the survey we ran a couple of months ago which looked at the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on food workers.

You told us that your wages don't give you enough to properly feed yourself and your family good food, that you have eaten less than you should have due to a lack of money and that you have had to buy cheaper food.

This isn't good enough in the biggest manufacturing unit in one of the richest nations in the world, for key workers that keeps the nation fed not just through a global pandemic, but every day.

Your responses helped us put together a report that has been used by Politicians, Charity sector organisations and the Trade Union movement to push for a **Right to Food** for everyone, to increase the minimum wage to at least £15 per hour regardless of age, to repeal Tory anti-trade union legislation, increase the rate of sick pay and curb the excessive profits of supermarkets and energy companies.



You can read the report on our website *Foodworkers on the Breadline* – Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU)

Lastly, a *thank you* and *goodbye* to two employees who have worked for you, our members, for over 20 years. **Pauline** (Organising Regional Secretary in Region 4) and **May** (Regional Clerk in Region 5) have both taken the decision to retire and embark on a new chapter of their lives. I know you will join me in wishing them both a long and healthy retirement!

*In Solidarity*

**Sarah**  
General Secretary



a fine turn out at Allied Bakeries, Liverpool





## NATIONAL PRESIDENT IAN HODSON

*"...if we can't change politics from Westminster, we will have to do it in our communities and workplaces with a clear understanding of our demands."*

AS WE HEAD TO OUR CONFERENCE, I think this is undoubtedly the bleakest period I have known in our union. The hard-fought-for Terms and Conditions won over decades are under unprecedented attack. The recent survey exposed the hardship suffered by those who work in our industry with pay in some places so low workers have to take on second jobs. We cannot sugar-coat it. We need to be open and frank.

The strike at Allied has exposed how the make-up of the 'consolidated rate' hides the reality of the core pay, which, when deconstructed, shows that it is *under* the recognised minimum wage. The fact is that shift and overtime payments have been rolled into them to give an *appearance* of being above the minimum wage, the reality is different and let's not forget Allied are part of the ABF with a £17 billion revenue – with an operating profit of £1,435 million. Yet it still seeks to deprive its workforce of a decent liveable wage when affordability is not an issue.

Like many of the companies we work with, the investment in the workforce is *as little as they can get away with*. Nobody wants to strike, and I completely understand why they want to avoid it. However, with 17.5% of members telling us in our recent Food Report survey (find it on our website) that they are going to foodbanks and what with employers slashing T&Cs then, if we don't respond, that figure will keep rising. I know people feel that getting their employer to pay £15 is too difficult a task, but if we don't start demanding it, then we will never achieve it and let's be clear when you **organise**, as in Warburtons, it *is* achievable.

2023 marks the tenth anniversary since our members at **Hovis Wigan** laid down the marker in the fight against job insecurity. This year is the 10th anniversary of the fantastic victory of defeating the use of zero-hour contracts in Hovis Wigan. It was an incredible victory and showed the rest of the union movement that it was possible to halt the roll-out of job insecurity. That famous quote, "*If you fight, you might lose, but if you don't, you always will,*" was something that galvanised those incredible members of this union.

Their courage, their solidarity with each other, and those exploited workers who ended up on full-time contracts showed that when *you stand together you win together* – they will and rightly should be woven into the history of our union. Solidarity builds strong workplaces. Supporting, recognising and celebrating our differences creates a better working environment.

The one thing you can count on is the diversion of politics to avert your eyes from the disaster created by the politically inept in Westminster. The cost of the greed crisis is the fault of politicians who sat out of harm's way and whose lifestyles are funded by us, the taxpayers, but yet seem to think carrying the burden is something that can get piled onto those with the least rather than take from the wealthy, whose bloating bank accounts are bulging as the rest of society gets considerably poorer.

Politicians love to talk of tough choices, yet they make the easy choice because they know they would get hammered by the Murdoch press if they dared tax his zillions or the wealth of his parasitic media baron mates – who in turn provide the daily poison to turn us against desperate human beings fleeing war and persecution. People in small dinghies did not create the crisis you face. ***It was politicians and corporations squeezing every penny out of you.***

Talking politics, I want to congratulate those recently elected in a wide range of parties, including Labour and Greens, on their success. But I understand the question that's constantly asked of us of how we change and build a better future for all – surely, '*one more push*' is the answer. ***Any Labour government is better than a Tory one.***

Starmer's Labour, he claims, is on course to win the next election. However, it's not as clear cut as he suggested – the recent turnout and actual voting showed little real enthusiasm, with low turnout, and the Lib Dems and Greens, as well as Independents, taking a more significant share of the vote. In recent conversations I have had with many people, it's clear that Starmer's Party are *not* viewed as the change people are demanding in many cases. He has apparently moved to the *right* of the Tories, his polling is behind that of Sunak, and he has failed to inspire anyone by his relaunches and policy changes.

So if we can't change politics from Westminster, we will have to do it in our communities and workplaces with a clear understanding of our demands in the coming months. We *will* see such a movement develop – we *will* be able to consider the principles and how they would change our lives and significantly, build a future for our children that's better than the life they are currently enduring.

**Politicians need to understand our priorities are for a better future, higher pay, an end to job insecurity, the removal of the anti-trade union laws, control and security of our energy supply, an NHS back in public ownership and fully-funded, amongst other critical changes for a better, more secure future.**

***The past we inherit, the future we build.***

To our fantastic strikers at *Allied*, Liverpool – you are an inspiration to our union and a credit to your families. Your courage to stand up and demand better is an incredible victory.

To all the delegates attending the Conference, I hope you find it useful educational purposeful, and an opportunity to build solidarity with your sisters and brothers across our fantastic union.

***Solidarity***

**Ian  
National President**



# SO, WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO?

WE HAVE BEEN BUSY since the start of the year, talking about our members and ensuring policies are passed at Conferences to support our work and *you* as members.

## STUC

We had 3 motions carried at this year's congress in Dundee which means, removing Zero hours contracts, regulating supermarkets and ensuring there is a right to food for all and financial accountability for employers who mis-manage consultation processes such as what happened to our members in *Dawnfresh* and *Orchard House Foods* are all now part of STUC policy..



## Yorkshire & the Humber TUC

This was to be the last conference that retiring Regional Secretary **Bill Adams** would be present at before his retirement at the end of July. There were fringe meetings held by Laura and Gareth through *Sheffield Needs a Payrise* and *Leeds get organised* along with a motion carried that ties in the region and its affiliates to support the growth of the **Union Towns** model within other trades councils.

The *Building an Anti-Racist Trade Union Movement* panel was the highlight of the conference:

**Kudsia Batool, TUC:**

*"We have to live our values, if we (trade unions) don't have the confidence of black staff, how can we have the confidence of black members?"*

**Ijeoma Omambula KC:**

*"Law is not the answer, there are times when litigation is the right thing to do, but should be part of a strategic plan, not the default position".*

**Ian Manborde, Equity:**

*"Why does the far right hate trade unions?"*

Ian told us about the horrific abuse and attacks Equity members receive from far-right groups that are rearing their heads again.

**Catherine Ward, Unison:**

*"When you look in the workplace those on the lowest grades are most likely to be black workers' and the need to make sure workplace policies are fit for purpose for migrant workers."*



## Northern TUC

We had a delegation of 3 attend the Northern TUC AGM this year including a young member which is great to hear!



## North West TUC

Unfortunately, we didn't have a delegation at this year's conference held in Warrington although the General Secretary called in for the morning session to talk about some of the work we are doing around the **Right to Food** and Phoenix companies as well as the importance of having our own houses in order so we can hold employers to account and working together to grow the movement.

## Womens TUC

We had a delegation of 3 attend the conference this year, two first timers which was great! There were a lot of motions on the disproportionate impact of the cost of living crisis on women, on menopause and domestic violence as well as the importance of *inclusivity*.



There was a **#MeToo** fringe meeting held as well as a TUCG one on misogyny, followed by an impromptu **#MeToo** photo op!

The anti-racism workshop was extremely interesting and the conference finished with a powerful international session where sisters from around the world spoke of their experiences trying to organise and function in war zones – their contributions really put into perspective what we are going through here and what things *could* be like.

## GFTU

This was a special biennial conference as it marked the retirement of **Doug Nicholls** the GFTU's General Secretary for the last 10 years and an activist and senior official in the trade union movement for well over 30 and the beginning of the new General Secretary's, **Gawain Little's** journey.

Our own General Secretary became the President for the next two years, only the third woman in history to take up the position!



We had two motions carried unanimously, one on supporting the call for regulation on supermarkets and right to food for all and the other on supporting the **Hillsborough Law Now** campaign.



### Black Workers TUC



A delegation of three attended the conference this year, where some powerful motions were debated about the disproportionate impact of the cost of living crisis on BAME workers as well as the importance of being a truly antiracist movement because if we are serious about holding employers to account we have to have our own house in order.

*And we have the Disabled workers TUC coming up in July!*

### Latin America Conference

The day conference crams an awful lot in covering the fantastic work going on in Latin America at the same time as reminding us of the sanctions and atrocities that are still in place across the region.



### Food and Work Network meeting – Sheffield

The third meeting of the network looked at the importance of organising throughout the food supply chain, the impact of free school meals including the stigma still attached! We also covered the realities of the agricultural side, which often sees migrant workers treated like modern day slaves, with no recourse to support, often leaving in more debt than they came.



## May Day

*Cardiff May Day Rally and March*



*Chesterfield May Day Rally and March*



*Barnsley May Day Festival*



*Belfast May Day Rally and March*





# WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY



Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Trades Union Council



Preston

North Lanarkshire



Wakefield – With  
Banners Held High!  
event



Cornwall – Samworth  
Brothers Rally





# INDUSTRIAL ACTION CALENDAR


**BMA**

Junior Doctors to take strike action for 72 hours

**14-17 June**

**BFAWU**

Allied Bakeries Liverpool

**30 May-4 June**

**HCSA**

Junior Doctor's to take strike action for 72 hours

**14-17 June**

**PCS**

Civil servants in Wales at National Library of Wales and Auditor General of Wales to take action

**7-8 June**

**prospect**

Strike action taken for civil servants and other public sector workers announced,

**next action  
7 June**

**RMT**

Railway workers working for 14 train companies to take strike action

**next action  
2 June**

**UCU**

Strike action at Kirklees College

**5 & 7 June**
**UCU**

Strike action at Barnet and Southgate College

**5 & 7 June**
**UCU**

Strike action at Keele University

**23-24 June**
**17-21 July**
**UCU**

Strike action at Cardiff University

**19-21 July**
**UCU**

Strike action at Tyne Coast College

**5 & 7 June**

**unite**

NHS – Members at Guys and St Thomas' to strike

**2 June**
**unite**

NHS – Members at Yorkshire Ambulance Trust to strike

**2 June**
**unite**

Workers at the homeless charity St Mungo's announce a month of strike action

**30 May-26 June**
**unite**

HGV drivers at GXO in Warrington to strike indefinitely

**22 May**
**unite**

Members working at Sulzer Pumps in Leeds to take strike action

**2, 9, 16, 23 and  
30 June  
7 July**
**unite**

HGV drivers working for Maen Karne in Cornwall to take strike action

**30-31 May  
1, 2, 5-9 June**



## DIMITRU MANOLE – MY STORY

I CAME TO UK in 2015 when I was invited by my cousin to start a new life. Life in Romania wasn't so brilliant with no future ahead. Although I've had other offers from other countries in Europe, I've chosen UK.

Reason for that was that I knew the language and the knowledge of this country (its history).

As soon as I came in, I asked my cousin to help me find a job which he did. I started working in a sandwich factory as an agency worker in June 2015 and in February 2016 I was recruited to the company with a permanent contract.

At the beginning I was shocked to see how many migrants' workers were in the factory. Many of them they couldn't speak English. The communication between them was very hard especially with the management.

So, I decided to give a hand for those in needs. At the beginning I've started to help my colleagues from my department me being the liaison between management and shop floor.

One day I was noticed by a person who realised that I was good at communication and approached me by introducing himself as **George Atwall** [FTO for BFAWU]. I asked him for more details about the BFAWU and what's their role here. Reason being that there wasn't too much information regarding the union at that time.

As soon as I was explained what's the function of a union in the workplace, I told him that I want to join the union.

And this is how I became union member.

In 2017 election took place for the Branch Secretary position and I was encouraged by many of the members to put my nomination in for the role. The reason why I accept the challenge then was that I wanted to help as many colleagues as possible and make as much members as possible.

It was a tough election since there were 6 members nominated for the branch secretary position. In the end I was very surprised to find out that I was elected in that position.

On the same year at the National Conference, I was elected in the EC. The reason that drove me to take this challenge on the national level was to show that if I can do it as a simple union members then I can encourage other union members to follow my lead.

In 2020 I was introduced to a new level of trade union movement. I met the socialist party local branch which they invited me on a zoom meeting. Later, the meeting I found out that a new coalition was formed on the political platform. It was TUSC. TUSC was a game changer for me on the local community level.

They encouraged me to participate in the local election as their candidate which I did.

**Dimitru Manole**  
Member of BFAWU Executive Council





# ARE YOU A TROUBLEMAKER?



## IF YOU WORK HARD AT IT.... YOU COULD BE!

[www.troublemakersat.work](http://www.troublemakersat.work)

**WE ARE CALLING on all 'troublemakers at work' to join us for this important one-day event.**

We need to bring together workers who have won improvements at work, taken strike action, and transformed weak unions into a strong voice for workers. Our event has a rank-and-file orientation: the labour movement is built and owned by the workers in it, not the paid officials or leaderships of unions.

Join this event if you want to:

- Win a pay rise,
- Change something about your work,
- Start a union at work, or
- Kickstart an existing union at work

**Date: Saturday 29 July 2023      Venue: Friends Meeting House, Manchester**

We will come together in participatory sessions led by activists and organisers. The event will have a rank-and-file orientation – focusing on building workers' own collective power and how we can democratically control our unions. We invite proposals for sessions and other ideas to shape the event. We expect the sessions will include the following:

- Success stories and key lessons from campaigns
- Debates about tactics and strategies in sectors
- Skill sessions and trainings
- Winning strikes, including: unofficial action, direct action, beating ballot thresholds, fundraising and solidarity, how to win
- Struggles of oppressed and under-represented groups
- Working with your union and maximising rank-and-file workers' control
- Links with non-workplace-based social movements such as climate, housing, feminism and/or anti-racism

Places are limited and we want to involve a diverse mix of workers. Free professional childcare is available and we will make our event as accessible as we can.

Our conference is organised by a democratic committee, without affiliation to political parties or particular unions. We are proudly supported by some serious organisations trying to build the most powerful workers movement possible, already including **Workers Can Win!**, **Strike Map** and **Organise Now!**



## IS COVID-19 AN INDUSTRIAL INJURY?

IT HAS BEEN THREE YEARS since the UK went into its first lockdown due to Covid-19. Sadly many people lost their lives and thousands were infected by the virus. Since the start of the pandemic the Government has reviewed the occupational risks of Covid-19. In November 2022 the **Industrial Injuries Advisory Council (IIAC)** published a paper relating to this and considered if **Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB)** could be made available. IIAC considered if there was enough evidence to show if, on the balance of probabilities, it is more likely than not that a case of Covid-19 infection could have been as a result of contact with the virus at work.

IIAC decided that there is only enough evidence available to recommend IIDB be awarded to health and social care workers who suffered with the following five serious conditions. These are:

- *Persisting pneumonitis or lung fibrosis following acute COVID-19 pneumonitis*
- *Persisting pulmonary hypertension caused by a pulmonary embolism developing between 3 days before and 90 days after a diagnosis of COVID-19*
- *Ischaemic stroke developing within 28 days of a COVID-19 diagnosis*
- *Myocardial infarction developing within 28 days of a COVID-19 diagnosis*
- *Symptoms of Post Intensive Care Syndrome following ventilatory support treatment for COVID-19.*

The review acknowledged that most people who were infected with Covid-19 experienced relatively mild or short-term symptoms but there was a small proportion who reported long-term symptoms. What many of us identify as 'long-term Covid' is not on this list despite the fact that the after effects of a diagnosis of Covid-19 can have on daily living and the ability to perform your job.

The Government has, however, confirmed that they will continue to collect and consider evidence, particularly for other occupations and also on the longer term effects of COVID-19. It is thought that a third report will be made available in due course.

**There is increasing pressure on the Government to recognise Covid-19 as an industrial illness.**

Recently the Senior Coroner for South Wales Central recorded the deaths of two nurses, who had contracted Covid-19 after working for the local health board during the early months of the pandemic, as industrial disease. This is very significant as it is thought to be the first case where Covid-19 has been formally recognised as an industrial disease. So watch this space.

**Lyndsey Gordon-Webb**  
Head of Disease Litigation  
Watkins & Gunn Solicitors



# INTERNATIONAL REPORT

## FRANCE

HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS of people have taken part in street protests and strikes across France amid fears of violent clashes with police, as demonstrations continue over Emmanuel Macron's use of constitutional executive powers to push through an unpopular raise of the pension age.

The Interior Minister, **Gérald Darmanin**, said 13,000 police had been deployed, 5,500 of them in Paris alone. He said the record number was justified by "a major risk to public order".

The protest movement against raising the pension age from 62 to 64 is the biggest domestic crisis of Macron's second term, with the strikes on Tuesday affecting refineries, bin collections, rail transport, air travel and schools. Authorities in Paris and several other cities were braced for clashes between police and protesters.

"The social state and the social safety net is disappearing," said **Françoise**, a social worker, who was due to retire in three months at 63 and was demonstrating in Paris.

**Yves**, a former teacher, and factory worker, who retired at 59, said: "People are demonstrating on the street because citizens aren't being listened to. We're afraid of being teargassed but the police should be protecting us."

**Inès**, 25, from Seine Saint Denis, who had worked as a supermarket cashier and in fast-food chains, said: "This is about workers on the streets fighting for their rights."

The crisis has intensified because of controversy over policing tactics, with lawyers complaining of arbitrary arrests, injuries and heavy handedness during crowd control. More than 30 lawyers wrote an open letter to *Le Monde* on Monday stating their 'great concern' over what they called arbitrary arrests of hundreds of people, accusing the police of using the judicial system and arrests as a tactic to put people off protesting.

***The Council of Europe said on Friday that peaceful protesters and journalists had to be protected from police violence and arbitrary arrest.***

What began as two months of regular, peaceful trade union-organised strike days has shifted to more impromptu protest gatherings over the past 10 days. There have been pockets of unrest in many cities and towns after dark, with fires lit on streets and property vandalised.

A preparatory note by French intelligence services before Tuesday's trade union-led day of strike and protests said many more young people were likely to take part, perhaps twice or three times as many as on the last big day of strike action last Thursday, French media reported.

According to the daily *Le Parisien*, the note said "the topic of repression and police violence ... could focus young people's anger".

Many young people at first 'didn't feel affected' by the pensions changes, but joined the movement last week, 'indignant' at the use of executive powers contained in article 49.3 of the constitution to bypass parliament, after the government feared it would not get enough votes.

Pickets continued at petrol depots and waste incinerators, particularly surrounding Paris, where 8,000 tonnes of rubbish were still piling up in streets across half of the city after weeks of bin strikes. Paris city hall said it would clear piles of refuse from the route of Tuesday's Street march to try to avoid fires being lit.

The government has vowed to hold firm, uncertain of how many more days of strike action would be called. Berger said the prime minister must come up with a "very big move on pensions".





# PALESTINE

**THE POLICY PAPER** signed by the Foreign Secretaries of the UK and Israel setting out a Roadmap for future relations between the two states marks a new low point in the failure of successive UK Governments to address Israel's systematic violations of international law.

Astonishingly not a single reference is made in the paper to Israel's ongoing military occupation of Palestinian territory and planned formal annexation of the West Bank, both of which the UK Government ostensibly opposes and recognises as breaches of international law. Reference to Palestinians is limited to one sentence in which the UK promises to cooperate with Israel "in improving Palestinian livelihoods and Palestinian economic development". Not a single mention is made of addressing Israel's ongoing denial of Palestinians right of self-determination and right of return.

The glowing description of Israel as a freedom loving and thriving democracy would have been grotesquely inaccurate at any point in the state's 75 years of existence. However, it is even more extraordinary coming at a moment when Israeli citizens are protesting at unprecedented levels against the Israeli Government's attacks on their democratic rights, including the ending of the independence of Israel's judiciary.



The UK Government appears to be entirely deaf to the mountain of criticism being aimed at Israel following the election of an extreme far-right Government, widely described as the most ultra nationalist, racist, misogynistic, and homophobic in Israel's history. The global reaction to these developments has included 250 Jewish American business leaders threatening the government with serious financial and political consequences if it goes ahead with its judicial 'reforms.'

To choose such a moment to vow to deepen the UK's financial, cultural, and military ties with Israel, delivers a very clear message of support to Netanyahu to continue his current path.

Of deep concern is the fact that the roadmap includes a further strengthening of cyber-security relations. The cybersecurity sector in Israel is interwoven with the military – with Israel being central to the development and export of military-grade spyware. This poses a danger to human rights across the world.



But of deepest concern is *the complete erasure of Palestinians from the picture*. For Palestinians, this new Government represents a continuation of a process of colonisation, ethnic cleansing and dispossession that has been enacted since the foundation of the state, and which has led to the imposition of a system of oppression now accepted across international civil society as a system of apartheid.

Not only does the UK Government continue to refuse to accept this reality, it gives credence to the Israeli Government's narrative that to accurately describe this system of oppression and call for action to address it, is a form of *antisemitism*. This grotesque conflation of antisemitism with legitimate critique of Israeli oppression, degrades political discourse and undermines a coherent antiracist position.

This is not new, but in the context of a government that does not seek to even disguise the raw racism and violence of its project with a mask of democracy, it gives a greenlight to continue that path. The UK Government's intentions to reward Netanyahu with deeper financial, security and cultural ties is not disrupted by the fact that his government has been killing Palestinians at the rate of *more than one a day* since the beginning of 2023.

That Netanyahu has accelerated plans for settlement expansion, and confirmed plans to move forward with the annexation of the West Bank doesn't seem to faze them. Neither does the UK Government feel the need to alter its path when dealing with an Israeli administration that contains Ministers like **Bezalel Smotrich**. Last month Smotrich openly called for a Palestinian village to be wiped out. Later he made a speech in France *denying the existence of the Palestinian people*.

This is an appalling position paper which can only serve to further undermine any role for the UK, as a state committed to upholding rights and international law. It will be condemned by all of those who adhere to these principles and who realise there is no way to bringing peace to the Middle East that does not address the root cause of conflict, **the ongoing denial of rights to the Palestinian people**.



## SUDAN

INTENSE CLASHES BETWEEN Sudan's military and the country's main paramilitary force have killed hundreds of people and sent thousands fleeing for safety, as a burgeoning civil war threatens to destabilise the wider region.

The clashes erupted in the middle of April amid an apparent power struggle between the two main factions of the military regime.

The Sudanese armed forces are broadly loyal to **Gen Abdel Fattah al-Burhan**, the country's *de facto* ruler, while the paramilitaries of the **Rapid Support Forces (RSF)**, a collection of militias, follow the former warlord **Gen Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo**, known as *Hemedti*.

The power struggle has its roots in the years before a 2019 uprising that ousted the dictatorial ruler **Omar al-Bashir**, who built up formidable security forces that he deliberately set against one another.

When an effort to transition to a democratic civilian-led government faltered after Bashir's fall, an eventual showdown appeared inevitable, with diplomats in Khartoum warning in early 2022 that they feared such an outbreak of violence. In the weeks before clashes broke out tensions had risen further.

**Sudan is in a volatile region bordering the Red Sea, the Sahel region, and the Horn of Africa.**

Its strategic location and agricultural wealth have attracted regional power plays, complicating the chances of a successful transition to civilian-led government.

Several of Sudan's neighbours – including *Ethiopia*, *Chad* and *South Sudan* – have been affected by political upheavals and conflict, and Sudan's relationship with Ethiopia has been strained over issues including disputed farmland along their border. Sudanese refugees have fled the recent fighting to the country's neighbours, including thousands who have crossed into Chad.

Major geopolitical dimensions are also at play, with Russia, the US, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and other powers battling for influence in Sudan.

The Saudis and the UAE have seen Sudan's transition as an opportunity to push back against Islamist influence in the region. They, along with the US and Britain, form the 'Quad', which has sponsored mediation in Sudan along with the UN and the African Union. Western powers fear the potential for a Russian base on the Red Sea, to which Sudanese military leaders have expressed openness.



## CUBA

FOLLOWING THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS ON 25 March, Cuba's National Assembly has met to elect a new Council of State and President and Vice Presidents of the National Parliament.

The 21-person body includes representatives from Cuba's mass organisations, including **Gerardo Hernandez**, 'Miami Five' hero, now the national coordinator of the **Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDR)**.

The previous National Assembly President, **Esteban Lazo**, and his vice presidents were nominated again. Ten new members include deputy director of the *Finlay Vaccine Institute*, **Yuri Valdés**, and Paralympic gold medalist, **Omara Durand**.

The average age is 47 years, and women make up 52 per cent, slightly under the 55.2 per cent of women who were elected to the 470 seat National Assembly.



# GFTU'S EDUCATION PROGRAMME 2023



Keep an eye on our website for more courses coming soon...

[www.gftuet.org.uk](http://www.gftuet.org.uk)

To apply for a place on a course, you should complete a **course nomination form** [available on the website]

**Please note:** Applications for all GFTU courses and events must be endorsed by your union. If nomination forms are not signed by your General Secretary or appropriate official, they will be returned to your union for completion.

**Always remember to quote the course number and title.**

You may be entitled to have paid release from work to attend a course. Recognised workplace representatives have a legal right to attend union approved courses. If you require any further information about this, please contact a member of staff at the GFTU or your local union officer.



## Bite Size Sessions

For new union activists or union members thinking about getting more involved – these modules will form the GFTU's **Passport to Activism**.

The programme will run over 4 sessions on consecutive days with recordings available after each session.

### 1 What is a good rep?

1st Run: 22nd May, 12:30pm.  
2nd Run: 10th July  
3rd Run: 6th October

### 2 Building Solidarity

1st Run: 23rd May, 12:30pm.  
2nd Run: 11th July  
3rd Run: 17th October

### 3 The Union Difference

1st Run: 24th May, 12:30pm.  
2nd Run: 12th July  
3rd Run: 18th October

### 4 Getting More Involved - Where Next?

1st Run: 25th May, 12:30pm.  
2nd Run: 13th July  
3rd Run: 19th October

## Standing up for a better workplace

**Venue:** GFTU Quorn Grange

**Residential Course:**  
May 31st - June 1st 2023

**Online Follow-on Sessions:**  
6th, 13th, 20th - 6pm

The course is residential for two days followed by three online 90 minute sessions.

*What do you think when you see employers sacking workers so they can reduce pay and conditions?*

*How do you feel when employers ride roughshod over workers' rights and mistreat their workforce?*

## Do you want to make a stand for a better world of work?

Any workplace rep who wants to explore more about their role and how they can answer these questions and get greater support in being effective in the workplace should attend this course.

It is suitable for new and more experienced reps who want to see the bigger picture about the challenges faced by workers in the UK and how unions, through their workplace reps, can become stronger.

We will be looking at the importance of the role of the rep in the workplace in defending workers' contracts of employment and ensuring that rights at work are enforced. We will explore where our rights at work come from and the battles fought to secure them and the skills necessary to be organised in supporting members and agreements.

Each rep attending the course will be encouraged to build their own action plan to build back worker power in their workplace and will be supported after the residential course to do so.

## Introduction to Health and Safety

The course is residential for two days with online 90 minute sessions the following week and 6 weeks later.

If you are a new health and safety representative or thinking about becoming one, then this course is for you.

You'll finish the course understanding your rights as a health and safety representative and how you and other reps can use health and safety to build your union in your workplace.

Participants will be encouraged to build their own action plan and online follow sessions will focus on supporting delivery of these action plans.

**Venue:** GFTU Quorn Grange

**Residential Course:**  
23rd-24th May 2023

**Online Follow-on Sessions:**  
30th May - 6pm & 11th July - 6pm

**Next run:**

**Venue:** GFTU Quorn Grange

**Residential Course:**  
12th-13th June 2023

**Online Follow-on Sessions:**  
19th June - 6pm & 24th July - 6pm.

## A Better Future GFTU Summer School

**Venue:** GFTU Quorn Grange

**Residential Course:**  
25th - 27th July 2023

**Online Follow-on Sessions:**  
5th September - 6pm &  
10th October - 6pm





# YOUNG MEMBERS' DEVELOPMENT WEEKEND

FRIDAY 3RD - SUNDAY 5TH  
NOVEMBER AT  
QUORN GRANGE HOTEL

If you are thinking of joining a union or are new to union membership, then this residential event is for you!

Full of inspiration, opportunity, education and networking, this is a real chance for young members across the movement to develop their skills, gain knowledge and create links with other trade unions.

✔ "Throughout the weekend, collectively, we learnt so much about how to stand up for ourselves and our fellow young workers."

✔ "...the things we learnt throughout the weekend are lifelong skills. Skills that we will use for long into the future as trade unionists. Empowering young workers this way is vital to the future success and strength of our movement. These weekends are essential for young trade unionists to attend."

## REGISTER NOW

This event is free for GFTU affiliated unions. If you are interested and not an affiliate, the cost is £325.

Please direct all enquiries to Education Administrator, Mark Robinson, via [mark@gftu.org.uk](mailto:mark@gftu.org.uk).

Please be aware that all applications are subject to a senior official or General Secretary sign off.

Please note: Applications close on Friday 8th September 2023.

Contact us:  
01509410978

Visit our website:  
[gftu.org.uk/learning-opportunities/](http://gftu.org.uk/learning-opportunities/)



## GFTU'S EDUCATION PROGRAMME (CONTINUED)

The course is residential for three days with online 90 minute sessions later in the year for participants to share progress made on their action plans.

*How does the Trade Union Movement move forward and what is the role of workers' leaders in doing so?*

The last year has seen an increase in union members standing up for better conditions at work and to oppose austerity. Many of those unions who have organised action have seen an increase in worker power and also in union membership.

The old challenges remain however. Whilst some unions continue to grow, others are

in decline. And real wages are falling as pay deals fail to match inflation.

We have good grounds for optimism as we start to win what have been significant battles. And we should celebrate that we have been able to mobilise and organise workers.

This course will look at where we go next and is aimed at union leaders who may be experienced, more senior workplace activists or may be full time officers. We will be developing our understanding of the challenges that face us and how we address them.

## Understanding Trade Unions

**Venue:** GFTU Quorn Grange

**Residential Course:**  
21st June 2023 (11am-3pm)

**Online Follow-on Sessions:**  
28th June - 1pm

This short course is aimed at union employees who may not have a background in trade unions who want to understand more about trade unions and how they function.

We will look at what makes trade unions different as an employer, what we aim to achieve with and behalf of members and how we go about doing so. It will cover what we mean by the organising approach, the challenges that face us and how we can overcome them.

The online follow-on session will help answer questions and support participants in delivering their action plans.

## Train the Trainer

**Venue:** GFTU Quorn Grange

**Residential Course:**  
2nd-3rd August 2023

**Online Follow-on Sessions:**  
12th September - 6pm

This course is aimed at any activist of officer who delivers training for union activists. The aims of this introductory course are to equip participants to be able to run training sessions and to explore ways in which they can make sessions lively and interactive.

The broad outline of the course is:

- how adults learn and learning styles
- making group work
- variety of learning methods
- using a scheme of work
- assessment and evaluation
- dealing with difficult situations

At least one follow on session will be held online to support participants in planning and delivering their own session.

We have some more courses to follow later in 2023. This will include further bitesize sessions, *industrial action*, *union representative stage 1 and 2 + safety representative stage 1 and 2*, *tackling sexual harassment*, *lessons in organising*, *roots of racism*, *digital organising and engagement*, *understanding the political economy*, *working class history and bigger picture online seminars* ...and a T.U.L.I.P programme

## OXFORD SUNNYSIDE FC



A FEW MONTHS AGO Region 7 Regional Council agreed to sponsor a local all-girls football team (one of our reps has a daughter in it) through their Region 7 fund.



They've just received their new kits for the season – *how great do they look!*



## SAYING GOODBYE

**WE'RE SAYING GOODBYE to two highly-valued colleagues who are retiring with over twenty years service:**

### May Benton

May was our Clerk in Region 5 office and she retired on the 24th May.



### Pauline Nazir

Pauline was a respected Regional Organising Secretary in Region 4. She retired on May 31st



***You will both be missed... but  
have a wonderfully happy  
retirement!***



## 50 YEARS OF SERVICE... so far

### Mohinda Badhen 50 years of service to the union

At REGION 3'S LAST Regional Council we were able to take time out to celebrate 50 years of **Mohinda Badhen** being in the BFAWU. Together with the Regional Officer, **George Atwall**, Regional President, **Douglas Johnstone** and National President, **Ian Hodson**, we were able to thank Mohinda for all the hard work he has carried out on behalf of the union and to present him with a Pewter Baker.

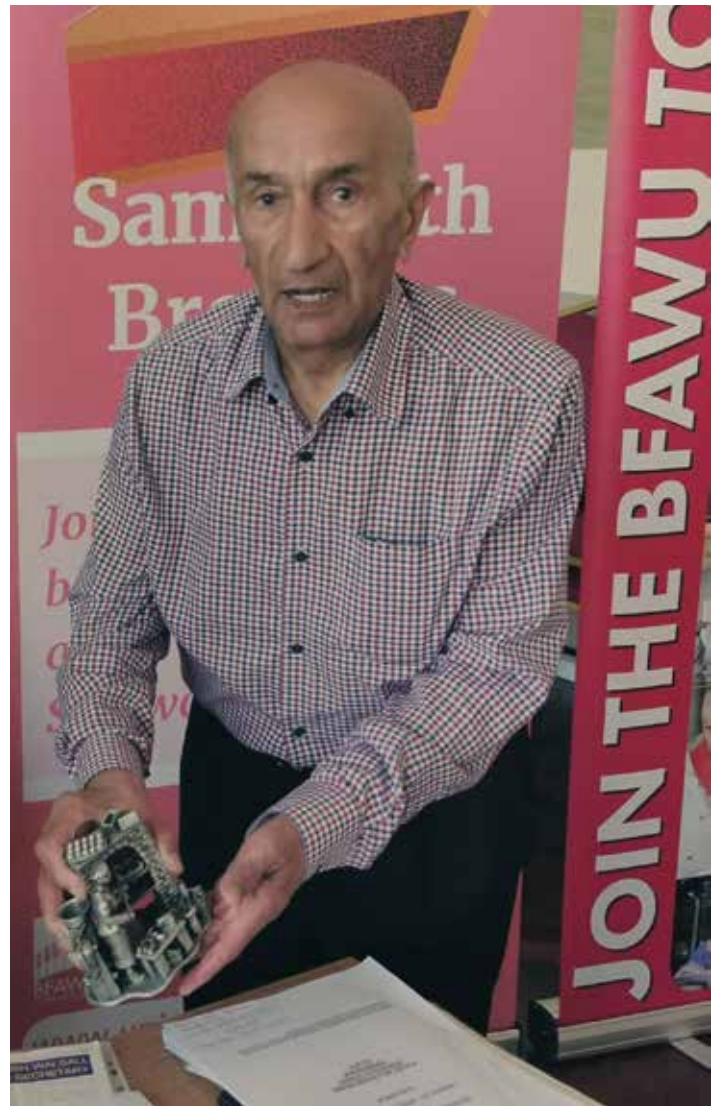
Mohinda originally came to the UK from the Punjab in 1963 and has stood with the union on many campaigns. He fought against racism in the UK and caste discrimination in India. Mohinda has now become a mainstay at Regional Council and at Conference, playing an active part in both.

Mohinda was able to relate to the regional council some of his stories about being an activist within the baker's union. He told us about his support for the miners during their strike in the 1980s when he stood alongside our own Joe Marino and Arthur Scargill. His own strong stand against racism saw his speech at the TUC being widely reported in the media. Indeed, he was interviewed by the BBC and was able to voice his fight against caste discrimination in his home country of India. The BBC was so impressed by his intimate knowledge on this subject that they sent him a letter of thanks.

Mohinda was able to thank the Baker's Union for the opportunities that it gave him in education. During his time he has been able to complete several City and Guilds, NVQs and even an HNC. At one point he was even offered an honorary degree for his achievements both in education and his experience as an activist within the union.

It is no doubt an honour and a pleasure being in a union with Mohinda, and to give thanks for all his hard work in making our union the progressive and forward-looking union that it is. Mohinda has played a positive active role in the history of our union and will undoubtedly do so in the future.

**Douglas Johnstone**  
Region 3 President



L-R Frank Loveday, Mr R.Arivalagan, M Mushtaq

## HOVIS, FOREST GATE 40 YEAR AWARD

IT WAS AN HONOUR and a privilege to present **Mr R. Arivalagan** (affectionately know as **Ari** ) for achieving 40 years membership of the BFAWU and employment at this site where he received his certificate and badge.

Ari joined the company in November 1982 and has worked in every department. Ari said he hopes to make it 50 years.

A group of work colleagues union reps and managers joined Ari for the presentation, where several light hearted memories and banter were exchanged followed by a buffet lunch which was arranged by **Mohammed Mushtaq** the Branch Secretary who I thank along with all his reps for the tremendous work they do for the members every day.

**Frank Loveday**  
Region 1 Officer

# WORK YOUR BRAIN

## WORDSEARCH

How many words can you find?

W	F	I	G	N	R	O	U	Q	X	O
A	O	F	W	P	K	D	I	V	O	C
B	T	R	N	I	G	H	T	S	J	O
U	M	C	K	C	L	A	B	T	O	N
C	R	E	Z	K	M	A	P	R	I	F
V	O	B	R	E	A	D	L	I	N	E
T	M	Y	Q	T	Y	W	I	K	N	R
K	A	N	O	R	C	A	M	E	H	E
I	N	S	P	I	R	A	T	I	O	N
T	I	S	R	A	E	L	C	I	X	C
L	A	L	A	I	R	O	M	E	M	E

WORDS CAN GO IN ANY DIRECTION (inc diagonally)!

**Clue:** you will find all of the words in this Foodworker... if you look closely enough!

## SUDOKU

Fill the 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contains all of the digits between 1 and 9

			1	6		9		
		9				5		7
		5	2				4	
7				9				
	6				1	3		8
5		1						3
	8			4			9	5
		3						4

difficulty: easy

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

## Prizes to be won!

These puzzles are designed as a piece of fun to keep your brain active and perhaps while away a bit of time on your break. There are, however, prizes to be won!

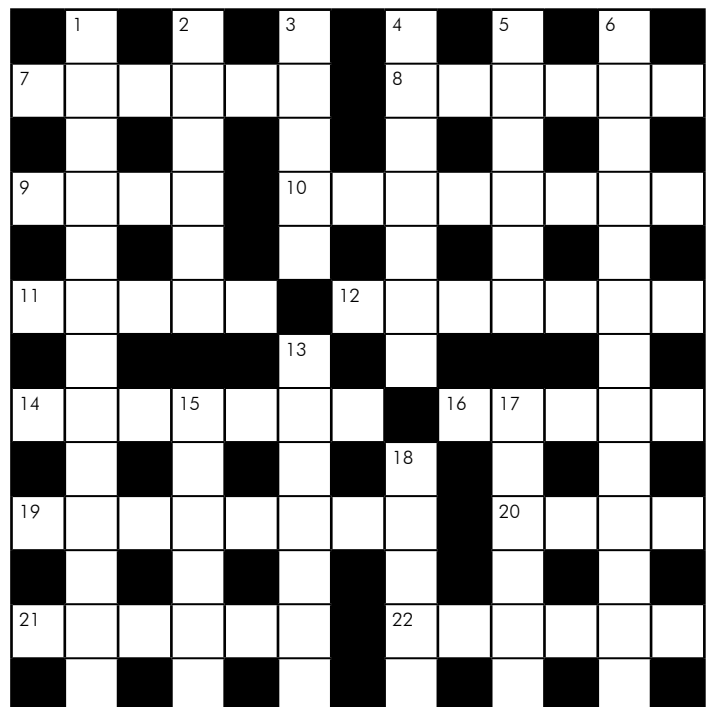
If you have completed a puzzle, take a picture of your answer and mail it to us at BFAWU Head Office:

[foodworker\\_puzzles@BFAWU.org](mailto:foodworker_puzzles@BFAWU.org)

We will check each entry and will contact you by email if you have won a prize.

Entries must be received by **30th April 2023** and winners will be announced in the next Foodworker.

## CROSSWORD



### Across

- 7 2nd smallest continent (6)
- 8 Microphone inventor (6)
- 9 Probability (4)
- 10 Fragile (8)
- 11 Join (5)
- 12 Couple (7)
- 14 Long established (3-4)
- 16 Mature (5)
- 19 Yes (3,5)
- 20 Profane expression (4)
- 21 Reduce (6)
- 22 Vestige (6)

### Down

- 1 Painful abdominal complaint (8,5)
- 2 Maiden Castle county (6)
- 3 Is inclined (5)
- 4 Colours developing in Autumn (7)
- 5 Performing animal show (6)
- 6 Reflection (13)
- 13 Conceive (7)
- 15 Shove (6)
- 17 Gadget (6)
- 18 Hiding place (5)



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JOIN THE  
**BAKERS, FOOD AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION**

If you or any of your work colleagues are interested  
in what the BFAWU can offer, scan the QR code to find out more  
and ***Join this Great Union!***

